



**MEMORANDUM**  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE**  
County of Placer

TO: Board of Supervisors

DATE: May 17, 2016

FROM: Jeffrey S. Brown, M.P.H., M.S.W., Director of Health and Human Services

SUBJECT: Approve a Proclamation Declaring May 2016 as Mental Health Matters Month

---

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Approve a Proclamation to promote mental health awareness by proclaiming May 2016 as Mental Health Matters Month in Placer County.

**BACKGROUND**

When mental health challenges are talked about, the language typically used to describe them tends to be clinical and impersonal. These words, while useful for doctors or clinicians, often don't do justice to what life with a mental illness feels like. That is why this year's theme for May is Mental Health Month—*Life With a Mental Illness*—is a call to action to share what life with a mental illness feels like to someone going through it.

Last year the national organization Mental Health America and our local chapter, NorCal Mental Health America, introduced the B4Stage4 initiative to help individuals understand that when you address mental health symptoms before Stage 4, people can often recover quickly and live full and productive lives.

This year, Mental Health America is building off the B4Stage4 message and encouraging individuals to give voice to what it really means to live at stages 1, 2, 3, and 4 of mental illness. *Life With a Mental Illness* is meant to help remove the shame and stigma of speaking out, so that more people can be comfortable coming out the shadows and seeking the help they need.

Many people do not seek treatment in the early stages of mental illnesses because they don't recognize the symptoms. Up to 84% of the time between the first signs of mental illness and first treatment is spent not recognizing the symptoms. Placer County residents report an average of 3.5 poor mental health days in a 30 day period. Fear of stigma or embarrassment of how others will perceive them is another barrier to early treatment. In an effort to reduce barriers to treatment, our community has distributed over 56,626 suicide prevention outreach materials, trained 12 community health workers in *Safetalk*, reached 511 students from 2 schools through the *Walk in Our Shoes Program*, and submitted over 24 high school films focusing on stigma reduction for the *Directing Change Campaign that focused on stigma reduction*. Knowing that you are not alone, and that others are going through a similar journey, makes taking the step toward treatment more accessible.

All over the nation people are using the hashtags #B4Stage4 and #mentalillnessfeelslike on social media to bring awareness of symptoms and reduce stigma. We are asking the Board to join the conversation and raise awareness about mental health by proclaiming May is Mental Health Month in Placer County and encouraging all of our residents to pay attention to their mental health, get screened B4Stage4, and to speak up about what mental illness feels like today!

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Proclamation

**IN THE MATTER OF A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING May 2016,  
AS, Mental Health Matters Month**

**WHEREAS**, mental health is essential to everyone's overall well-being, and

**WHEREAS**, all Americans experience times of difficulty and stress in their lives; and

**WHEREAS**, prevention is an effective way to reduce the burden of mental illness;  
and

**WHEREAS**, mental health challenges are real and prevalent; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a strong body of research that supports specific tools that all  
Americans can use to better handle challenges, and protect their health and well-  
being; and

**WHEREAS**, with early and effective treatment, those individuals with mental  
illnesses can recover and lead full, productive lives, and

**WHEREAS**, each business, school, government agency, healthcare provider,  
organization and citizen share the burden of mental illnesses and have a responsibility  
to promote mental wellness and support prevention efforts.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED**, that the above PROCLAMATION  
was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer, on behalf of the  
citizens of Placer County, at a regular meeting held, May 17, 2016, proclaiming the  
month of May 2016 as Mental Health Matters Month.

---

Robert M. Weygandt, Supervisor, District 2  
Chairman 2016

Jack Duran, Supervisor, District 1  
Jim Holmes, Supervisor, District 3  
Kirk Uhler, Supervisor, District 4  
Jennifer Montgomery, Supervisor, District 5